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(DISREGARD PREVIOUS NEWS CLIPS)

Region 2 News Clips

Gjonaj, DEP Host Rain Barrel Giveaway (BRONX TIMES; May 23, 2019)

Councilman Mark Gjonaj and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection recently hosted a rain barrel giveaway for residents.

Long Island City sound-and-lighting warehouse to go through environmental cleanup (QUEENS COURIER; May 23, 2019)

The Slate Property Group, the purchasers of the building that houses sound-and-lighting equipment company See Factor, have submitted a Brownfield Cleanup Program application with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and are looking for public comment.

State: \$585 million to treat, contain water contaminants in Bethpage plume (NEWSDAY; May 23, 2019) **A state report recommends 24 wells connected with miles of piping, five treatment plants and recharging the cleaned water into the aquifer through four basins and irrigation at areas including Bethpage State Park.**

New York State on Thursday released a \$585 million plan to contain and treat the Bethpage groundwater pollution plume that has been spreading for decades from former Northrop Grumman and Navy facilities.

Report: Hudson Falls trash plant among country's 'dirty dozen' incinerators (GLENS FALLS POST-STAR; May 23, 2019)

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Company that operates Poughkeepsie's water and sewer facilities to take on larger role (MID-HUDSON NEWS; May 23, 2019)

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Site testing at the former McGuire Chevrolet dealership showed no elevated levels of harmful substances in the soil, setting the stage for Sussex County Community College to begin the process of purchasing the Main Street property.

State fines 2 companies \$527K for dumping waste on Sparta lot (NEW JERSEY HERALD; May 23, 2019)

Two Newark companies have been fined by the state Department of Environmental Protection for dumping solid waste at 309 Houses Corner Road in Sparta, then selling it as "clean" fill to area property owners.

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EPA grants \$ 315,000 to Puerto Rico for water quality monitoring on beaches (EL NUEVO DIA; May 23, 2019) Google (Translate English)

The grant supports the program of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

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Full Article Region 2 News

BRONX TIMES

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By Robert Wirsing

May 23, 2019



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QUEENS COURIER

Long Island City sound-and-lighting warehouse to go through environmental cleanup

My Max Parrott

May 23, 2019



The Slate Property Group, the purchasers of the building that houses sound-and-lighting equipment company See Factor, have submitted a Brownfield Cleanup Program application with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and are looking for public comment.

The developer purchased the site at 37-11 30th Street from the estate of Bob See in May 2018 for \$33.27 million. Now the real estate group is using the BCP to clean up possible contamination from the property and facilitate its redevelopment.

The historical use of the site that is suspected to have contributed to the contamination includes a garage and plastics manufacturer, in addition to the aforementioned See Factor. But based on the findings of an investigation on the property, the process is not cause for alarm for neighborhood residents. The NYSDEC has determined that the site does not pose a significant threat to public health or environment.

The draft of the remedial action work plan for the site consists of the excavation and offsite dumping of historic soil, excavation of hazardous waste, removal of underground storage tanks, analysis of soil samples and backfilling the affected areas.

NYSDEC will accept written comments about the proposed plan until June 29 and revise the cleanup plan as necessary. The plan is publicly available at the Queens Library at Long Island City, 37-44 21st Street, and the Queens Community Board 1 office at 45-02 Ditmars Blvd.

The public should send their comments to Hasan Ahmed, the DEC project manager, at 47-40 21st St., Long Island City, NY 11101; to hasan.ahmed@dec.ny.gov; or call 718-482-6505.

NEWSDAY

State: \$585 million to treat, contain water contaminants in Bethpage plume

A state report recommends 24 wells connected with miles of piping, five treatment plants and recharging the cleaned water into the aquifer through four basins and irrigation at areas including Bethpage State Park.

BY David M. Schwartz

May 23, 2019



New York State on Thursday released a \$585 million plan to contain and treat the Bethpage groundwater pollution plume that has been spreading for decades from former Northrop Grumman and Navy facilities.

Using engineering and groundwater modeling developed over the past two years, the preferred alternative recommended in the state report proposes 24 wells connected with miles of piping, five treatment plants and recharging the cleaned water into the aquifer through four basins including at Bethpage State Park and Massapequa Creek.

"With the release of this groundbreaking plan to contain and treat the Navy/Grumman plume, we are taking action on a comprehensive system to safeguard communities and ensure that Long Island's drinking water and environment are protected for generations to come," Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said in a statement.

The state's plan calls for 16 wells along the margins of the plume and eight in the interior. It would be treated for 1,4-dioxane using the advanced oxidation process, as tests show it's necessary.

After treatment, water would be recharged at basins in Bethpage State Park, existing recharge basins near the Southern State Parkway, re-used for irrigation at Bethpage State Park and deposited into Massapequa Creek. The plan would require 23.5 miles of underground pipes to be installed.

The plan is designed to stop further movement of the plume, prevent contamination from reaching un-impacted drinking water wells and reduce concentrations in currently impacted wells, reduce the volume and concentrations within the Navy Grumman plume and reduce the time it'll take to clean up the site.

Bethpage Water District, which provides water to 33,000 customers, has spent millions of dollars treating water to get it to meet state and federal drinking water standards. The plumes have been spreading at an estimated rate of a foot-per-year, including to Massapequa, South Farmingdale and Levittown water districts.

The latest model of the plume found it extends 4.3 miles south toward the Southern State Parkway and to depths of 900 feet below ground. At its widest point, the plume is now about 2.1 miles wide.

The recommended alternative surrounds the plume with extraction wells, which will pump and treat 17.5 million gallons of water per day. The water will be treated to drinking water standards, according to a senior DEC official, before it is put into recharge basins, used as irrigation, including at Bethpage State Park, or put into the creek.

Alternatives in a state report released in 2016 looked at pumping water and sending it out to the Atlantic Ocean. But the senior DEC official said that could cause a dramatic reduction in the level of the aquifer, which could cause saltwater to spread into drinking water sources.

There will be a 45-day period for public comment through July 7, after which the state will formally select one of five alternatives proposed in the report. The report, launched in 2017, cost \$6 million and involved drilling new monitoring wells up to 1,000 feet deep, plus 3D modeling of the plume with the United States Geological Survey, consultants and state DEC staff.

Capital costs are expected to cost \$200 million, and operation and maintenance over the next 30 years will cost in excess of \$300 million.

Cuomo in December 2017 announced plans for 14 extraction wells at the border of the plume, plus four extraction wells inside Bethpage. In his January State of the State, he said, "We've been talking for decades. Grumman doesn't want to pay, the Navy doesn't want to pay. Let us say we'll do the remediation and then we're going to sue you to get the money back, but we have to keep our people safe."

GLENS FALLS POST-STAR

Report: Hudson Falls trash plant among country's 'dirty dozen' incinerators

By Gwendolyn Craig

May 23, 2019



he Wheelabrator trash-burning plant in Hudson Falls is listed as one of the top polluting incinerators in the country for lead, mercury and carbon monoxide, according to a national report on waste incinerators released Tuesday.

It has not exceeded its permit requirements, nor has it had any recent violations, but some local and national organizations still worry what the cumulative impacts of its emissions are on the community.

The report is called “U.S. Municipal Solid Waste Incinerators: An Industry in Decline.” and was researched and created by The New School’s Tishman Environment and Design Center in New York City. It was sponsored by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, with support from organizations that focus on impoverished communities and environmental justice, including the JPB Foundation and the Overbrook Foundation.

The report also found that about 79% of municipal solid waste incinerators are in low-income communities and communities of color.

Hudson Falls is considered in that bracket, with a poverty rate of about 20%, according to 2017 U.S. Census data.

The communities where these incinerators operate are burdened by other polluting industries, the study found, creating an unknown cumulative impact on the health of those who live in an approximately 3-mile radius.

It’s a familiar story to the Glens Falls region, which is home to Finch Paper, Ames Goldsmith, Lehigh Cement and others.

“This is a real concern for people’s health around those types of industrial areas,” said Denise Patel, the U.S. program director for the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, in a phone interview. “The Wheelabrator facility in Hudson Falls was one of the top ones for emissions of lead. ... There’s no real safe level of exposure to lead, specifically for children. That’s a concern.”

The report lists Wheelabrator Hudson Falls as the top lead-emitting incinerator in the country, under a list called “the dirty dozen.”

In a 2011 chart compiled by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, it was listed as the top lead emitter of all 10 trash incinerators in the state, and emitted levels higher than some coal-burning plants.

Michelle Nadeau, a spokeswoman for Wheelabrator Technologies, said in an emailed statement Wednesday that Wheelabrator completes “more than 520 compliance checks each day to ensure our facility meets the strict air-quality standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to safeguard public health and the environment.”

When asked about the report, and whether it had any concerns about the trash plant in Hudson Falls, the state Department of Environmental Conservation said in an emailed statement that it “requires all permitted facilities to adhere to strict conditions in order to protect public health and the environment.”

The department is continuing to review the report, but Wheelabrator has been operating within its permit. Wheelabrator was also not listed on the report’s list of top violators.

The state Department of Health did not offer a comment on the report on Wednesday.

Many incinerators are also getting older, Patel said, and becoming more costly to fix.

The Hudson Falls incinerator began operating in 1991. According to the report, the average life expectancy of incinerators in the U.S. is about 31 years.

The New School’s report is not the first national group to take note of Wheelabrator.

The Energy Justice Network, led by attorney and environmental advocate Mike Ewall, has been studying the impacts of trash incinerators and is looking to close them all. Ewall spoke at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls earlier this month, hosted by a grassroots organization called the Clean Air Action Network.

Ewall said Wednesday that he had concerns about The New School’s report, especially how it mapped the incinerators. He thought there were some “glaring errors,” especially in their locations and what that meant for the poverty rate and communities of color.

Overall, however, Ewall has been collecting and sharing similar emissions information to advocate for Wheelabrator’s closure.

Most recently at the Glens Falls talk on May 6, he noted that Wheelabrator emits 67% of the area’s hydrochloric acid, 40% of the area’s lead and 41% of the area’s mercury, also based on the EPA’s 2014 emissions inventory data.

Tracy Frisch, founder of the Clean Air Action Network, said in an email Wednesday that she applauded the findings in The New School’s report.

“Pragmatically, C.A.A.N. recognizes that we need to start planning a future without a trash incinerator,” she wrote. “That’s why starting this fall we will be working with other local, forward-thinking groups and individuals to develop a local Zero Waste plan. Following the lead of a growing number of other localities, we can drastically reduce the amount of waste that residents and businesses send for disposal, and create new jobs in the process.”

That's what Ewall has been advocating for, as is the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives.

Both Ewall and Patel talked about reducing the use of plastics, composting food and organic waste, recycling and reusing items.

Ultimately, they'd like to see no emissions coming from these plants.

Nadeau said Wheelabrator and waste-to-energy technology "is globally recognized as a safe and environmentally responsible form of waste management and energy creation. ... Waste-to-energy reduces greenhouse gases by one ton for every ton of waste. Each year, our Hudson Falls facility diverts 159,000 tons of waste from landfills, separates 2,400 tons of metals for recycling and safely produces 14 (gross) megawatts of clean, renewable baseload energy — enough to power 14,500 homes, offsetting the need for roughly 193,000 barrels of oil or 58,000 tons of coal."

Hudson Falls Mayor John Barton and Deputy Mayor Bob Cook did not respond Wednesday to an email request for comment about the report. In a past story, Cook had called Wheelabrator Technologies "good stewards of the property."

He added that they are taxpayers and generate good-paying jobs. Barton had said in the past that he had confidence in the state and federal regulatory agencies that monitor Wheelabrator.

NJ SPOTLIGHT

Environmentalists Protest Expansion of Roseland Compressor Station

By Joanna Gaggis, NJTV News

May 23, 2019

It started with singing and ended with two under arrest, as environmentalists gathered in a last-ditch effort to stop the expansion of a compressor station in Roseland, part of a larger gas pipeline expansion run by Oklahoma-based Williams Companies.

The protesters said the expansion is unnecessary because the current compressor is only operating at 10 percent and that it has the potential to harm surrounding wetlands and puts local residents' health at risk with events like "blowdowns."

"A blowdown is when, temporarily, they have to release all the pressure in this facility. So that means they're releasing huge quantities of not only natural gas, but any chemical additives or other harmful gases that are in the facility," said Matt Smith, organizer of Food and Water Watch.

Williams denies that saying, "There were no noxious gases released, only methane, which is a nontoxic and naturally occurring gas that is much lighter than air and dissipates into the atmosphere when vented."

Roseland resident Cassandra Worthington isn't convinced. "I have asthma, and since I moved here, I've been having asthma attacks more than I've ever had in my whole life. This affects us personally. It affects the community, this affects our environment," said Worthington, a Food and Water Watch volunteer.

Company claims ‘...virtually zero impact’

Williams Companies spokesperson Chris Stockton said they have designed the project in an environmentally responsible manner.

“This federally approved project is designed to have virtually zero impact on surrounding neighbors and the environment, with almost all of the work taking place within the existing fence line. Since the station horsepower upgrades feature electric driven compressors, its operation will not significantly impact noise or air quality,” Stockton said.

While protesters called on Williams to leave the state, their frustration, even anger, was focused mostly on Gov. Phil Murphy.

“Despite Gov. Murphy’s rhetoric that he is committed to fighting climate change, and getting New Jersey to 100 percent renewable energy, his administration approved the massive expansion of this frack gas compressor station right here in Roseland,” Smith said.

They are taking the issue to court. “The borough of Roseland, their local government, as well as multiple environmental groups, including Food and Water Watch, are legally challenging the permits that were granted by Murphy’s administration to allow for this destruction to happen,” he said.

The environmentalists are calling on Murphy to issue a stay on construction until the appeals have been settled in court.

MID-HUDSON NEWS

Company that operates Poughkeepsie’s water and sewer facilities to take on larger role

May 23, 2019

The Veolia Company has been managing the City of Poughkeepsie’s water and sewer operations for almost 30 years and now it is going to take on an even greater role with the transfer of existing DPW workers directly to their payroll.

City Administrator Marc Nelson said it is part of the ongoing restructuring of the city’s operations and will provide funding necessary for upgrades.

“The initial projections are that savings can be anywhere from \$300,000 to \$350,000 a year,” Nelson said. “We are designing some additional repair work that has been long deferred that may eat into some of those savings, but the gist of this program is that it allows us to capture the savings while at the same time investing those savings in critical projects throughout the city.”

The current city workers at the water and sewer plants will have the option of being picked up by Veolia or move over to another area of DPW.

NEW JERSEY HERALD

Satisfactory test results from McGuire site clear the way for SCCC purchase

By Kyle Morel

May. 23, 2019

Site testing at the former McGuire Chevrolet dealership showed no elevated levels of harmful substances in the soil, setting the stage for Sussex County Community College to begin the process of purchasing the Main Street property.

SCCC President Jon Connolly said Wednesday that Environmental Compliance Monitoring (ECM), a Hillsborough-based company representing the McGuire group, has completed the second and final phase of tests required by the college before it takes ownership of the land. He said that representatives from EcolSciences, SCCC's environmental consultant, have been in "consistent communication" with ECM during the remediation process and are in agreement with the findings.

According to Connolly, ECM drilled two permanent monitoring wells into the property and let them sit for about two weeks before drawing water samples. The company had been looking mainly for the presence of heavy metals and aromatic hydrocarbons but found "no exceedances" of the two substances, he said.

Connolly said the college does not yet have a specific date to officially buy the property from the McGuire group. Before a purchase can happen, he said, ECM needs to file paperwork with the state Department of Environmental Protection for a site-wide response action outcome, a document certifying that a site adheres to remediation requirements.

"The very earliest it could happen is July," Connolly said of the purchase date, though he added that the time frame is "not impossible, but it is ambitious."

He said that most likely, the purchase would take place sometime later in the summer.

While the building now known as the McGuire Technical Education Center has been hosting welding and automotive classes since November, SCCC has been leasing the property as McGuire's experts take care of remediation issues. The lease agreement was approved by the Sussex County Board of Trustees at the group's July 2018 meeting.

Connolly said he and fellow SCCC officials are optimistic about the future of the college as it adds new programs to the McGuire site and expands on ones already in place. With purchase plans on the horizon, he noted that the college will be working with the town of Newton as it focuses on making progress in the neighborhood identified as an area of redevelopment.

NEW JERSEY HERALD

State fines 2 companies \$527K for dumping waste on Sparta lot

By Bruce A. Scruton

May23, 2019

Two Newark companies have been fined by the state Department of Environmental Protection for dumping solid waste at 309 Houses Corner Road in Sparta, then selling it as "clean" fill to area property owners.

Just over a year ago, Sparta police began watching the area around Route 15 and Houses Corner Road following complaints of noise, trucks tracking dirt and mud onto the highway, and possible illegal dumping.

On Wednesday, the DEP said it was levying \$527,500 in civil penalties against Sinai Trucking LLC; its owner, Angel A. Bravo-Gomes; and its president, Anthony Gomez. A second administrative order and penalty of \$185,000 was placed against Keila Transport LLC and its owner, Gabriel Campoverde.

Keila Transport is the listed owner of the property at 309 Houses Corner Road last spring.

Sussex County tax records show Keila purchased the nearly 10-acre lot in August 2017 for \$550,000.

At that time, police were writing tickets to individual truck drivers for muddying up the highway and for any vehicle infractions. They also cited the company for excess noise because of power washers being used before 6 a.m.

Last month, township police stopped a Sinai-owned truck, with an expired registration, that was carrying a load of soil that had the smell of diesel fuel and chlorine. The truck was stopped on Route 15 and later impounded.

In Wednesday's release, the DEP said both firms listed Newark as their principal business address, but both used the Houses Corner Road lot as "illegal" solid-waste transfer stations. In the findings that accompanied the release, the DEP said the two firms were closely linked and Bravo-Gomez, owner of Sinai, is listed as the manager of Keila Transport.

The DEP was at 309 Houses Corner Road on July 23, 2018, and observed that "respondents (the two companies) had accepted over 50,000 cubic yards of waste construction and demolition debris and was operating this location as a storage and transfer site for waste construction and demolition debris."

A tandem dump truck, which has three axles, can hold between 10 and 14 cubic yards, depending on the type of load, such as sand, which packs together, or debris, which loosely fills the dump body.

The investigators reported they saw "mixed soil, concrete, wood, tile and plastic sheeting wastes, brick, block and asphalt" in the material on site.

More than just dumping the material at the Houses Corner lot, the department accused the companies of re-selling the material "from this location and possibly other locations unknown to various residential properties identified below who had contracted with Respondents to provide 'clean fill' when in fact the material was solid waste."

Listed in the complaint against Sinai were two properties each in Fredon and Montague and one in Lafayette.

Investigators said they talked with the homeowners and made on-site investigations and found that instead of "clean fill" as expected, the material contained "solid wastes and, depending on the location, consisting of mixed soil, concrete, brick, asphalt millings, wood, tile, plastic sheeting, re-bar and sewer treatment tank residue."

The DEP order and findings with regard to Keila said that company had been under investigation at the Houses Corner Road site from Feb. 28, 2018, through Sept. 10, 2018.

The findings note the department is continuing its investigation of additional instances of potential illegal waste dumping and transport and reserved the right to amend its order and add more fines.

The companies were ordered to immediately stop operations in New Jersey and remove all solid wastes to an approved facility, stop transportation of solid waste in New Jersey and not dump any material except at an approved facility.

Within 30 days, the companies are to submit a list of all sites where they transported fill and/or arranged to have fill material transported and submit a corrective action plan to legally dispose of all solid wastes illegally deposited in the state.

In addition to the civil assessment, the DEP can also seek to reclaim "the economic benefit (in dollars) which a violator has realized as a result of not complying with" state law dealing with solid waste disposal.

Sparta Mayor Molly Whilesmith was not aware of the DEP's action until asked for a comment.

She said taking action was the proper thing to do.

"We cannot let this (illegal dumping) go on without seeking to stop it," she said of cases in other parts of the county, such as Vernon -- a known dump site -- and rumors of other dump sites in other municipalities.

"This sort of activity has gone on for decades," she said. "Seems like people are looking for forested land or land that (appears) 'unowned.' It needs to stop."

PUERTO RICO

EL NUEVO DIA (Google – Translate English)

EPA grants \$ 315,000 to Puerto Rico for water quality monitoring on beaches

The grant supports the program of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

By El Nuevo Dia

May 23, 2019

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced this afternoon that Puerto Rico will receive \$ 315,000 for the beach water quality monitoring program and public notification.

Through a press release, the EPA reported that the grant is granted with the start of the summer season, and that it will be awarded up to \$ 9.24 million in 39 states, territories and tribes, subject to compliance with the eligibility requirements.

"Puerto Ricans and tourists rely on warning systems on water quality to be up-to-date on the conditions of our beaches," said Pete Lopez, regional administrator of the EPA.

"This grant complements the work of the EPA to help Puerto Rico recover from the effects of hurricanes Irma and María, supports the water quality monitoring system of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico, and enhances the environmental, economic and cultural benefits," he added.

For his part, Andrew Wheeler, Administrator of the EPA, said that "these grants will increase public information about the quality of water on our beaches and help our states and local partners to test and address potential sources of pollution."

Under the federal Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act, EPA awards grants to eligible state, territorial and tribal applicants to help them monitor water quality on coastal and Great Lakes beaches.

When the levels of bacteria to swim safely are very high, these agencies notify the public by placing warnings on the beaches or closing them.

Since 2002, state and local governments, territories and tribes have used nearly \$ 167 million in EPA grants, according to the law, to monitor beaches for fecal indicator bacteria, to maintain and operate public notification systems, identify local sources of contamination and report monitoring results, among others.